



# CONFIDENCE NEWS

AUGUST 08 - AUGUST 31 TSTA PATROL



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# Captain's Cabin

Family and friends of CONFIDENCE, I trust are all well! Though we had a brief deployment this time, it was incredibly busy. The focus of the deployment was our biannual Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA) in Mayport, FL. Primarily, TSTA (known as REFTRA in the past) is a period where the crew and our on-board training teams are evaluated by Coast Guard and Navy personnel from the Afloat Training Group to ensure we are ready to perform our missions. Secondly, TSTA is an opportunity for newly-reported shipmates to learn the ship, and learn how to fight and save the ship in a number of warfare and damage control scenarios. It is a 'crucible' of sorts and the crew did a great job! Normally, cutters go through TSTA with a fully-trained crew who has been aboard for several months. Such was not the case for us this time. Since it was summer, we experienced a significant turnover in the crew. We said goodbye to over 1/3 of our shipmates and welcomed new ones from across the Coast Guard (see page 11). Still, the enthusiasm, dedication and hard work by this crew was incredible and produced tremendous results.

We left home on August 8<sup>th</sup> and spent three days at sea conducting dozens of drills and exercises to give the crew a taste of what was to come at TSTA. We sailed to Mayport, Florida and over the course of the next three weeks, sent dozens of the crew through Shipboard Firefighting and Damage Control Training, Rescue Swimmer Training and conducted over 200 drills and exercises earning the coveted 'Battle E' for readiness excellence!



I think I have met nearly every new spouse and family so far this during this summer transfer season and look forward to meeting those who will arrive in Cape Canaveral in September. I welcome you all to the CONFIDENCE family! As we return to home port, we will commence a contracted dock-side maintenance availability. Though not as exciting as a counter-drug patrol, this maintenance requires a lot of hard work from the crew and is critical to keeping this 47 yr-old ship performing her missions. I am reminded daily of the sacrifices that your sons, daughters, and spouses aboard CONFIDENCE make in the service of their country. You should be very proud of them. Read on in this newsletter and see what they've accomplished in ensuring our readiness to keep America safe.

Fair winds and following seas,

CAPT Jim Passarelli  
Commanding Officer

# XO's notes

Greetings CONFIDENCE family...

The end of TSTA is finally in sight! It's been a busy past few months, with all of the preparations, drills, and training that we did both prior to and since arriving in Mayport. As I reflect on the last couple months, I think back to the progression I've seen of the crew in our damage control proficiency. The preparations we took during the month of July have paid huge dividends in our performance at TSTA. The cutter and crew have triumphed over all obstacles, from bad weather to long training days. Of special note to me was the crew's performance during one particular underway training day, where we encountered horrible sea conditions, rain, and strong winds... of all days, this was the one where we had to conduct towing operations, precision anchoring, and other drills from morning to night. It was a challenging day of drills, but all were completed safely and effectively.

As we near the end, I realize that I'm typing this quick note on our scheduled drill make up day. Each and every member of the crew has worked hard and their efforts ensured that today was a day where make up drills weren't necessary.

From defeating the St. John's River to battling Machinery Space fires, floods, terrorists, and runaway anchors, this cutter and crew is ready to take on any challenge.

-R. P. Hill, LCDR

Executive Officer

# Command Chief's Corner



Greetings from the Chiefs Mess!

While this was not a traditional patrol, it was a very busy time for everyone in both the lead up and time away. The crew did wonderful in preparing for our training in Mayport and an even better job while we were there. I had a great deal of interaction with the Afloat Training Group that conducted the training and every day they were impressed by the professionalism, enthusiasm and open mindedness of the crew. The crew completed all that we asked of them, which included several 14-hour days which got hot and sweaty at times. I write this to let you know how hard your loved ones worked throughout this patrol and I hope that you enjoy having them home again.

FSC Pete Drayer



## TSTA through The Eyes of the DCA

ENS Orlando Morel

“Now, CONFIDENCE is entering a training environment...” As we sat in anticipation, listening to that heart-melting speech, we began to get all jittery and anxious. How long have we waited to perform for the Afloat Training Group (ATG)? How long have we spent rehearsing over and over, striving for perfection? Our stage has never looked more ready and our act has never been so flawless. Haven’t we practiced, practiced, and practiced some more until perfection became our friend and imperfection a stranger?

As the speech drew to a close, we started looking for any inclination of what was to come. Fire? Flooding? Toxic gas? Doubt started inching in and fear began feeding on our doubts. Very slowly, panic started tugging at our hearts. No!! We have worked too hard to be swallowed by the shear fear of doubt. We have sacrificed too long to come up short of our prize: the Coast Guard Battle E.

“Now Flooding, Flooding, Flooding...” When the order was made to set general emergency, we all marched towards our assigned billets. We knew the drill. Establish communications within a minute, report manned and ready within five, and start setting boundaries. We attacked the flooding on all sides and then attempted to give the final blow at the source. Just when we thought we had won, the flooding overtook us and we got in way over our heads. Then the command was given to erect shoring on the space to save the ship from going under. As soon as the order was made, we heard “Now Fire, Fire, Fire...” So this is it, the “blitzkrieg of events” drill. Acknowledging this, we split our forces and

# The Perfect Performance:

## TSTA through The Eyes of the DCA

Repair Locker III continued to attack the flooding while Repair Locker II was sent to fight the fire. “Now there has been a report of personnel casualty...” Upon hearing the pipe, Damage Control Central (DC Central) huddled together and broke after coming up with a strategy. The Battle Dressing Station (BDS) would



take on the Personnel casualty on the Bridge, Repair Locker II would continue to go one on one with the fire up forward, and Repair Locker III would finish back aft with the flooding. Ready. Set. Go! “Now fire, fire, fire...” When will this end? Luckily, the fire was near Repair Locker 8 who tackled the fire so quickly that it did not stand a chance.

“Now fire, fire, fire...” Enough with the fires! This time, the fire was in the engine room and it was time to test the engineering watch stander’s actions. They took proper initial actions giving the ship a fighting chance.

Again and again the casualties kept coming. After two and a half hours of correctly combating each casualty, we were victorious and utterly exhausted. Our teamwork had never been orchestrated so well.

“Congrats guys,” our EO said. “You all did really well today.”

We all let out a tired long sigh. That was one busy day. And it was only the beginning...

# TALES OF A SEA ROOKIE

I had only just transferred to the CGC CONFIDENCE a little over a month ago. Upon arriving, I immediately found that I had my work cut out for me. Everyone was so busy preparing the ship and getting ready for this evolution called “TSTA”. Well me, I was in awe just to be on the boat. You see I never owned or had any boating experiences in my life.

I was prior service Army before joining, which allowed me to skip the non-rate portion of the Coast Guard so I missed the traditional



“Baptism of Salt” that most “newbies” experience. To be honest, I have never even been on a cruise. This is what led me to put the CGC CONFIDENCE at the top of my e-resume list! I figured what the heck, I would earn some sea time, hang out in sunny Florida, and see the Caribbean from time to time; how bad could it be? After all, who wants to do 20 years of service and retire from the Coast Guard without ever actually touching a ship? Not me, that’s for sure. In my eyes, that was equal to making the football team and sitting the bench the entire season! The trick now was to try and blend in with the culture of the boat without seeming clueless. In any case,

# TALES OF A SEA ROOKIE



it was game time. There is no need to broadcast that I don't really know where the FORWARD ends and the AFT begins. There is no point in revealing that it took me a week to realize that there was a personal storage compartment underneath my rack. And yes, it took a few days for me to understand that "SWEEPERS" was

something that I needed to participate in and not just something the non-rates on duty did (thanks FS1 Perez). So when the day came for us to get underway I was very excited.

It was finally happening, "I might even get a sea story out of this" I thought to myself. Then of course, a mere two hours after getting underway, guess what happened? I got SEASICK! I ended up spending more time throwing up in the head than appreciating my first underway journey. Thank goodness for HS2 Allen being ever so handy with the Dramamine pills or I may have been down all day. A special shout out to the cooks, as my King crab lunch was great on the way down and not too shabby on the way out either.

So one way or another, I guess I did come away with a valid sea story to tell the grandkids one day. Sad to say I am still not quite sure I know what TSTA stands for but I will get it together sooner or later. All in all I have got to say that I am glad to be a part of the crew, and whether for better or worse, I am getting just what I wanted from this cutter: Some much needed salt on this Yeoman's collar.

- J. G. Robinson, YN1

# FROM THE DECK PLATES

## •SN MATTHEW BARTNICK

As soon as we arrived at Naval Station (NS) Mayport, I knew that I we had a long month ahead of us. As a crew aboard the CONFIDENCE, we have to show the ATG that we can handle incidents and survive. The Afloat Training Group (ATG) riders were the experts on every drill we were scheduled to run so for the next three weeks, we had to prove to the experts that we are the best at what we do.

The more senior non-rates in the Deck Department did an impressive job in setting the example of what to do and when to do it in most of the deck force operations. When we arrived at TSTA, the senior members briefed all of us on our department specific operations such as towing, anchoring, mooring, man overboard pickups and departing our pier assignment at NS Mayport. We worked together to make sure that everything ran smoothly as well as exhibiting our safety practices in order to show the ATG riders that we operated safely and efficiently. Overall, this month was a positive learning experience for all hands in the deck department.

The addition of BM3 Showers to the deck department couldn't have come at a better time. BM3 spent his non-rate days on the CGC MEL-LON, and reported to the CONFIDENCE from BM "A" school. He hit the ground running the weeks prior to TSTA heading paint projects and getting to know the department



# FROM THE DECK PLATES

## -SN MATTHEW BARTNICK

the department, showcasing his work ethic and friendly personality. The “deckies” were happy to have received BM2 Phillipp shortly before TSTA. His expertise as a Boatswains Mate ranges vastly, and the entire department has greatly appreciated his presence on deck. With everyone’s unified effort, the deck department accomplished many things while attending TSTA in Jacksonville.



We certified one new cutter swimmer (SN Bartnick) and recertified a previous cutter swimmer (SN Mathews). As well as fully qualifying SN Garner. The Deck Department also averaged a score of 98% on specific department drills. Another highlight of the month spent here was the days spent at the wet trainer and fire trainer. It was exhilarating being able to combat a real fire, and experience real flooding. Just one more lesson learned at Mayport that will prove to be irreplaceable on a real patrol.

The real truth behind TSTA is that credit or recognition doesn’t belong to any specific department aboard the USCGC CONFIDENCE, it belongs to the entire crew. As a new member learning about all of the shipboard operations, I saw that it was clear how hard each department was working in order to ensure a successful trip. Everyone was equally exhausted at the end of each work day which showed that despite the variation of our work projects, we all still put in 100% effort and worked as a team while here.

# CONFIDENCE CREW AND FAMILIES

## WELCOME ABOARD

LCDR Robert Hill  
 ENS Conor Lee  
 ENS Kimberly Kopcak  
 ENS Nolan Gallagher

EMC Anthony Luciani

OS1 George Tynes  
 GM1 Kenny Dingman  
 YN1 James Robinson  
 MK1 Fernando Cruz  
 MK1 Joseph Boraski

HS2 Dorian Allen  
 MK2 Rodney Wedner  
 IT2 Travis Long

BM3 Cody Showers  
 BM3 Brandon Monella  
 SK3 Richard Klosterman  
 OS3 David Krahn  
 ME3 Sean Dixon

EM3 Evan Whitlock  
 FS3 Nicholas Ruddy

FN Grant Rogers  
 FN Bryce Shipley  
 SN Matthew Bartnick  
 SN Valentin Carasquillo



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# A Look At the Patrol



